

الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنُ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ
In the Name of Allah, The Most Merciful, The Most Kind

ALL ABOUT SALAH

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"O my Lord! make me one who establishes regular Prayer,
and also (raise such) among my offspring,
O our Lord!, and accept Thou my Prayer."
[Surah Ibrahim; 14: 40]

Types of Prayer

Salah is composed of the compulsory (fard) and the superogatory (sunnah, nafilah, etc).

Type	Significance
Fard	Compulsory
Wajib (Witr)	Necessary - it holds a shade less of a high status than Fard. Denying something necessary is corruption (fisq) but not disbelief. Leaving it is sinful.
Sunnah Mu'akkadah	Confirmed/strong sunnah - it is something the Prophet (salAllahu alayhi wasalam) invariably did, most of the time, leaving only occasionally. One is rewarded for doing it and deserves blame for leaving it without excuse, because it entails 'turning away' from the guidance of the Messenger of Allah (salAllahu alayhi wasalam), whom we have been commanded to follow. It is sinful to persistently leave it.
Sunnah Ghair Mu'akkadah	Non-confirmed/lesser sunnah - it is something the Prophet (salAllahu alayhi wasalam) did occasionally. There is a reward for doing it and no blame or sin for leaving it. [Shurunbulali, Maraqi al-Falah, 116, Maktaba al-'Ilm al-Hadith]
Nafil	Voluntary - Optional

Number of Rak'ahs of Salah (Units of Prayer)

It is obligatory to perform the following five prayers during each day and night at their stated times:

See the chart below for number of Rakaats to be prayed for each Namaaz - () means Ghair Muakkida

Name of Namaaz	Sunnat-e-Muakkida	Farz	Sunnat-e-Muakkida	Nafil	Witr-Wajib	Nafil	Total Rakaats
Fajar	2	2					4
Dhuhar	4	4	2	2			12
Asar	(4)	4					8
Maghrib		3	2	2			7
Isha	(4)	4	2	2	3	2	17
Jumma'h	4	2	4 - 2	2			14

Timings of Prayer

Salah has to be offered at or during its proper fixed time. No salah can be said before its time

Prayer	Timing
Fajr	Dawn Prayer - takes place before sunrise. At moderate latitudes, it begins approximately one hour and twenty minutes before sunrise and ends about ten minutes before sunrise.
Dhuhr	Noon Prayer - begins just after the sun has passed the meridian. It lasts until shortly before the Asr Prayer begins.
Asr	Afternoon Prayer - begins when the length of the shadow of an object is equal to the object's length plus the shadow's length at noon. It ends about 10 minutes before sunset.
Maghrib	Sunset Prayer - begins immediately after sunset. At moderate latitudes, it ends before complete darkness approaches.
Isha	Night Prayer - begins, at moderate latitudes, when the sky is completely dark and ends just before the Dawn Prayer.

Diagram of the Timings of Prayer:

Summary of the Five Daily Prayers

Name	Number of Rak'ahs	Silent/Aloud
Fajr	2	Aloud
Dhuhr	4	Silent
Asr	4	Silent
Maghrib	3	First 2 aloud, third silent
Isha	4	First 2 aloud, last two silent

Conditions of Salah

There are a number of conditions that need to be fulfilled before you can perform your salah.

Pre-requisite	
Time	Salah must be offered at or during its proper fixed time. No Salah can be said before its time.
Cleanliness	You must have the proper taharah (purification) before performing salah - this involves having made wudu (or ghusl), and removing any najas (filthy) substances from your clothing.
Dress	Before offering salah, you have to make sure that you are properly dressed. A man's body must be covered between the navel to the knees and shoulders. A women must cover her whole body except her hands, face (and feet).
Place	The place of prayer must be clean and free from filth. You must pray facing qibla (direction towards Makkah). Your salah should preferably be offered in jama'at (congregation).